

# FROME RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

## ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

Embodying the Report of the Sanitary Inspector  
FOR THE YEAR 1937

GENTLEMEN,—

I beg to submit my 20th ANNUAL REPORT on the Public Health and Sanitary Administration of the Frome Rural District for the year ending December 31st, 1937.

### Vital Statistics.

#### BIRTHS.

The number of live births registered during the year was 109—62 boys and 47 girls.

This is considerably lower than last year, which was the lowest on record and corresponds with the alarming decline in the number of births in the country generally.

*The Birth Rate* per 1,000 population is 10.86.

The rate for England and Wales is 12.4.

#### DEATHS.

*The Infant Mortality*, that is the number of deaths under one year of age, is 7. The increase over last year was due to deaths under the heading "congenital debility and malformation including premature birth."

The *Rate* per 1,000 registered live births is 64.

The rate for England and Wales is 72.

#### *Deaths under one year analysed :—*

Under one week .. .. .	6
One to four weeks .. .. .	1
One to six months .. .. .	0
Six to twelve months .. .. .	0
—	7
—	—

The *Causes of Death* under one year of age were as follows :—

Prenature Birth .. .. .	3
Congenital Abnormality .. .. .	1
Birth Injury (due to rapid or difficult Labour) .. .. .	2
Broncho-Pneumonia .. .. .	1
—	7
—	—

#### THE GENERAL DEATH RATE.

The number of deaths registered during 1937 was 84—46 males and 38 females.

The number after correction for inward and outward transfers was 118—64 males and 54 females.

This gives a death rate, after correction for transfers, of 10.7—practically the same as last year.

The rate for England and Wales is 14.1.

#### THE CAUSES OF DEATH.

Tables showing the causes of death (classified), and the ages at which death occurred, will be found in the Appendix.

Among the causes of death Cancer now heads the list instead of Organic Disease of the Heart, as usual.

Cancer seems to be steadily increasing: 19 this year as against 13 last year, and 11 the year before.

Deaths from Influenza have risen from 5 last year to 12 this year.

Deaths from Respiratory Diseases, however, were somewhat lower.

There were no deaths from Diphtheria, Scarlet Fever, Measles, or Whooping Cough.

#### Sanitary Circumstances in the Area.

##### WATER.

*Nunney.*—This supply has given very little trouble during the year. The water meters, which were fixed last year to check the consumption of water at farms, have had a noticeable effect in conserving the water for the use of others, and a constant supply has been maintained throughout the year.

*Buckland Dinham.*—This supply has again proved adequate, and, apart from slight breakdowns due to temporary causes, no serious matters arose.

*Leigh-on-Mendip.*—On account of the diminution in the yield of the springs at the end of the summer and the increased use of the water, control was exercised over the distribution of it for a short while, and this resulted in all consumers being supplied, and very little inconvenience was felt.

*Norton St. Philip, Rode and Beckington Regional Scheme.*—The works for carrying out this scheme were being pushed on with and it is hoped that the supply will be in operation at an early date. A further test of the yield at the borehole was carried out, when it was reported by the engineers that the quantity available showed no diminution.

*Faulkland.*—Investigations were made during the year as to possible sources for a supply to this village, but no satisfactory source was discovered, and it seems more than probable that an extension from the Regional Scheme at Norton St. Philip will be the most practicable solution.

*Coleford.*—The dryness of the year had a marked effect upon the yield of the springs, and the supply to this village was maintained only by the regulating of the pumps, and the issue of a warning against wasting water. Close observation was kept on the springs and journeyings taken for the period August to October when the springs began to

recover. The lowest gauging taken was during the week ending October 16th. A report was presented on the question of the discontinuance of standpost supplies, of which a number are still in existence. The Council offered to pay half the cost of laying the service pipes, etc., from main to the boundary of the premises in all cases where the supply is at present taken from standposts. Great progress has been made in this direction and it will eventually mean that all standposts will be removed, and a most unsatisfactory system dispensed with.

*Wanstrow.*—Some anxiety was again experienced as the dry season caused the usual fall in the yield of the springs; but the issue of warnings against wasting water, and the shutting down of the main at night, enabled the supply to be maintained during the day.

*Mells.*—Very close watch was again maintained on this supply, and all consumers were requested to exercise great care against wastage during the summer period. But notwithstanding this a supply of water to houses at high points was not always available inside the houses, and users had to carry water from standpipes at lower levels. The question of obtaining a supply to supplement the existing one is receiving the Committee's attention.

*Rivers and Streams.*—Constant watch is kept upon this question, and any instances where pollution is discovered are dealt with.

No serious matters of pollution arose, but several minor instances were dealt with.

#### Ministry of Health Inquiries.

The Regional Water Scheme for the Parishes of Norton St. Philip, Rode and Beckington, was approved.

#### Sewerage and Drainage.

*Coleford.*—The new sewerage and sewage disposal works were completed during the year. The connection of existing sewers to the new sewers was carried out and numbers of individual house drains have also been connected.

*Rode.*—A scheme for the sewerage and sewage disposal works for this village is in course of preparation, and a large amount of preliminary investigation work has been done.

*Nunney.*—These works have been well maintained, and regular attention has been given them, and no troubles have been encountered. A complete set of new covers has been provided for the tanks and other small matters put right.

#### Scavenging and Refuse Disposal.

*Coleford* is the only village where the collection of the whole of the house refuse is carried out under Sec. 42, P.H.A., 1875, and the work has been satisfactorily done.

Constant watch has been kept on the bad practice of casting refuse in odd places, and the provision of receptacles for refuse has been insisted upon.

Further additions of outlying portions of the area have been added to the districts from which the collection of indestructible house refuse is undertaken, *e.g.*, Kilmersdon—and portions of the parish near Holcombe, and also the recently added area of Rode.

#### Sanitary Inspection of the Area

201 premises were inspected for sanitary defects during the year.

28 nuisances were discovered.

For the remedy of these the number of notices served was:—

(a) Statutory	..	..	..	..	0
(b) Informal	..	..	..	..	28

All these were abated by the end of the year.

#### Eradication of Big Bug:

The District is singularly free from this pest, and no instances of bug infestation were discovered.

#### Schools.

The sanitary condition and water supply of all schools in the area are satisfactory. No nuisances were reported during the year.

*School Closing.*—The following schools were closed during the year on account of the prevalence of infectious diseases:—

1. *Witham Friary*—25/1/37 to 29/1/37 inclusive for Influenza, and again 29/1/37 to 5/2/37 inclusive for Influenza.
2. *Coleford Council*—28/1/37 to 5/2/37 inclusive for Influenza.
3. *Hemington*—29/1/37 to 5/2/37 inclusive, for Influenza.
4. *Kilmersdon Endowed*—1/2/37 to 5/2/37 inclusive for Influenza.
5. *Great Elm*—1/2/37 to 5/2/37 inclusive for Whooping Cough.
6. *Buckland Dinham*—8/2/37 to 12/2/37 inclusive for Influenza.
7. *Nunney*—5/7/37 to 18/7/37 inclusive for Measles, and again 19/7/37 to 1/8/37 inclusive for Measles.
8. *Wanstrow*—30/11/37 to 13/12/37 inclusive for Chicken Pox, and again 13/11/37 to 23/12/37 inclusive for Chicken Pox.

Wanstrow and Nunney were closed by the Local Authority, the others by the County Authority.

#### Inspection and Supervision of Food.

##### Milk Supply:—

Number of Producers on the Register	..	386
Number of Distributors on the Register	..	63
divided as follows:		
(a) Distributors only	..	3
(b) Distributors who are also producers	..	60
(A producer is only included as a distributor if he definitely makes a business of selling his milk by retail to individual customers.)		
Number of licencees given to Graded Milk Distributors	..	3
Particulars of designation:—		
Accredited Bottling Licence	..	1
Pasteurising Licence	..	1
Supplementary Pasteurisation Licence	..	1
		—
		3
		—

The number of licencees issued by the County Council is steadily increasing and the amount of time taken up in undertaking the sampling of milk from these farms is very considerable.

*Examination of Milk for Tubercle Baccilli.*—75 samples from the milk of 409 cows were taken for the County Medical Officer of Health. Of these only one sample was positive.

*Meat Supervision and Examination.*—Visits have been frequently made to slaughter houses and other premises for this purpose during the year.

4 whole carcasses of beef, 3 calves, and 6 pigs were condemned and destroyed, in addition to various offals.

##### Slaughter Houses:—

Number licensed	..	..	..	10
Number registered	..	..	..	1
				—
				11

Knacker's yards	..	..	..	2
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*Bakeries.*—The number remains the same as last year. No nuisances were reported.

#### Prevalence of, and control over, Infectious Diseases.

There was no serious outbreak of infectious disease in the area during the year. No cases of Diphtheria, Enteric, or Dysentery were notified.

*Scarlet Fever.*—Twenty-five were notified, of which eighteen were sent to the Isolation Hospital at Shepton Mallet, and the remaining seven treated and isolated at home. There were no deaths and no sequelae.



The twenty-five cases occurred in some ten different parishes, and were all but three among school children.

A large number of infectious diseases among school children are spread by the habit of moving children of the age of 11 and upwards from villages to towns and back every day.

*Ophthalmia Neonatorum*.—Only one case was notified and this has recovered without any impairment of sight.

*Influenza*.—The outbreak towards the end of 1936 was continued through the early months of 1937, and caused twelve deaths. There was a large number of cases among school children, and this caused considerable disorganisation of school work during January and February.

*Puerperal Fever*.—Only one case occurred. This was treated in hospital and recovered.

*Tuberculosis*.—The number of notifications during the year is still very low :—only five cases of pulmonary and one of non-pulmonary tuberculosis. There were four deaths, all from pulmonary cases.

No unnotified cases were discovered.

#### Factories, Workshops and Workplaces.

These have been inspected throughout the district during the year.

Nine informal notices were served for minor defects, which have all been complied with.

## APPENDIX

### Statistics and Social Conditions of the Area.

Area (in acres) .. .. .	51,933
Population (estimated resident mid-1937) ..	10,023
Number of Inhabited Houses (end of 1937) ..	2,845
Number of Families or Separate Occupiers ..	2,854
Rateable Value (at end of 1937) .. ..	£34,636
Sum represented by a Penny Rate .. ..	£144

*Social Conditions*.—The chief occupation in the area is farming and the production of milk. Next to that is stone quarrying and crushing. Coal mining is confined to the neighbourhood of Coleford and Mells.

#### Extracts from the Vital Statistics of the Year.

	M.	F.
<i>Live Births</i> : Legitimate .. ..	60	43
Illegitimate .. ..	2	4
	62	47

*Birth Rate* per 1,000 of estimated resident population, 1936

<i>Stillbirths</i> :		
Legitimate .. ..	3	2
Illegitimate .. ..	0	0
Total .. ..	3	2

*Deaths* : Death rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population, 1937

<i>Deaths from puerperal causes</i> :	
Puerperal sepsis .. ..	0
Other puerperal causes .. ..	0
Total .. ..	0

*Death rate of Infants under one year of age* :—

All Infants per 1,000 live births .. ..	64
Deaths from Cancer (all ages) .. ..	19
"    "    Measles (all ages) .. ..	0
"    "    Whooping Cough (all ages) ..	0
"    "    Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age) ..	1

#### The Ages at which Death occurred.

Under one year .. ..	7
1 year and under 2 years .. ..	1
2 " " " 5 " .. ..	1
5 " " " 15 " .. ..	3
15 " " " 25 " .. ..	5
25 " " " 45 " .. ..	11
45 " " " 65 " .. ..	24
65 " and upwards .. ..	66

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#### The Causes of Death were as follows :—

Measles .. ..	0
Scarlet Fever .. ..	0
Whooping Cough .. ..	0
Diphtheria .. ..	0
Influenza .. ..	12
Tuberculosis Lungs .. ..	4
Other Tubercular Diseases .. ..	0
Cancer .. ..	19
Menigitis .. ..	1
Organic Heart Disease .. ..	18
Bronchitis .. ..	10
Pneumonia .. ..	4
Other diseases of respiratory organs .. ..	2
Diarrhoea and Enteritis .. ..	1
Appendicitis .. ..	3
Nephritis .. ..	4
Puerperal Fever .. ..	0
Other Puerperal Causes .. ..	0
Congenital Defects and Deformation including	
Premature birth .. ..	4
Violent Deaths (not suicide) .. ..	7
Suicide .. ..	1
Other Defined Diseases .. ..	22
Old Age .. ..	6

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### General Provision for Health Services for the Area.

*Hospitals*.—One Cottage Hospital in Frome available for the Rural District. The work of enlarging this is now well advanced.

One *Isolation Hospital* in Shepton Mallet is available for this District.

*Ambulance Facilities*.—One Red Cross Motor Ambulance, kept in Frome, is available for the District. The Isolation Hospital in Shepton Mallet has its own motor ambulance.

#### Public Health Officers of the Local Authority—

One Medical Officer of Health.

One whole-time Sanitary Inspector whose duties include also management of the Water Works, and Council Houses, Building Inspector, and Petroleum Inspector.

One Assistant Sanitary Inspector.

*Nursing*.—The Area is well covered by the County District Nurses.

*Clinics and Treatment Centres* are situated in Frome.

### Housing Statistics for the Year 1937.

*Number of New Houses erected during the year* :—

(i) With State Assistance	
(a) By the Local Authority .. ..	14
(b) By other Bodies or Persons .. ..	0
(ii) Otherwise .. ..	21
	35

#### Housing Inspections.

- (a) Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts) .. 275
- (b) Number of inspections made for the purpose .. .. 622
- (a) Number of dwelling-houses (included under sub-head 1 above) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925 126
- (b) Number of inspections made for the purpose .. .. 231
- Number of dwelling houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation .. .. 16
- Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation .. 97

*Housing Action :*

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of *informal action* by the Local Authority of their Officers .. 60

*Action under Statutory Powers during the year :—*

A. (a) Proceedings under Sections 9, 10 and 16 of the *Housing Act 1936* .. .. *nil*

B. (b) Proceedings under *Public Health Acts* .. *nil*

C. (c) Proceedings under Sections 11, 13 and 26 of the *Housing Act 1936* :

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which *Demolition Orders* were made .. 5

(2) Number of dwelling-houses *demolished* in pursuance of *Demolition Orders* .. 20

(3) Clearance Orders made .. .. *nil*

(4) Clearance Orders confirmed .. .. *nil*

*Housing Act 1936—Overcrowding*

(a) (i) Number of dwelling-houses overcrowded at the end of the year .. 5

(ii) Number of families dwelling therein 5

(iii) Number of persons dwelling therein 32

(b) Number of new cases of overcrowding reported during the year .. *nil*

(c) (i) Number of cases of overcrowding relieved during the year .. 8

(ii) Number of persons concerned in such cases .. .. 55

(d) Particulars of any cases in which dwelling houses have again become overcrowded after the Local Authority has taken steps for the abatement of overcrowding .. *nil*

**Notifiable Diseases during the year 1937**

<i>Disease.</i>	<i>Total Admitted to Cases Isolation notified.</i>		<i>Hospital</i>	<i>Deaths</i>
Small Pox .. ..	0	0	0	0
Scarlet Fever .. ..	25	18	0	0
Diphtheria .. ..	0	0	0	0
Enteric Fever .. ..	0	0	0	0
Puerperal Fever .. ..	1	0	0	0
Ophthalmia Neonatorum .. ..	1	0	0	0
Dysentery .. ..	0	0	0	0
Pneumonia .. ..	9	0	3	0
Acute Polisingelitis .. ..	1	0	0	0
Total .. ..	37	18	3	—

*Tuberculosis*

	<i>Total cases notified.</i>		<i>Total Deaths.</i>
Respiratory .. ..	5	4	—
Non-respiratory .. ..	1	0	—
Total .. ..	6	4	—

<i>Age Periods</i>	<i>New Cases</i>		<i>Deaths.</i>	
	<i>Respiratory.</i>	<i>Non-Respiratory.</i>	<i>Respiratory.</i>	<i>Non-Respiratory.</i>
	<i>M. F.</i>	<i>M. F.</i>	<i>M. F.</i>	<i>M. F.</i>
0— .. ..	—	—	—	—
1— .. ..	—	—	—	—
5— .. ..	1	—	—	—
15— .. ..	—	—	1	—
25— .. ..	2	1	2	—
35— .. ..	—	—	—	—
45— .. ..	1	—	—	—
55— .. ..	1	—	—	—
65 and upwards .. ..	—	—	—	—
Totals	0 5	1 0	2 2	0 0

**Factories, Workshops and Workplaces**

Including Inspections made by Sanitary Inspectors or Inspectors of Nuisances.

*1.—Inspection of Factories, Workshops and Workplaces :—*

<i>Premises</i>	<i>Inspections.</i>	<i>Number of Written Notices.</i>	<i>Occupiers prosecuted.</i>
Factories (including Factory Laundries)	12	0	0
Workshops (including Workshop Laundries)	22	0	0
Workplaces (other than Outworkers' premises)	6	0	0
Total .. ..	40	0	0

*2.—Defects found in Factories, Workshops and Workplaces :—*

<i>Particulars</i>	<i>Number of Defects Found Remedied</i>	
<i>Nuisances under the Public Health Acts :—*</i>		
Want of cleanliness .. ..	5	5
Want of ventilation .. ..	2	2
Overcrowding .. ..	—	—
Want of drainage of floors .. ..	—	—
Other nuisances .. ..	—	—
Sanitary accommodation—		
Insufficient .. ..	2	2
Unsuitable or defective .. ..	—	—
not separate for sexes .. ..	—	—
<i>Offences under the Factory and Workshop Acts—</i>		
Illegal occupation of underground bakchouse (s.101) .. ..	—	—
Other offences (excluding offences relating to outwork and offences under the Sections mentioned in the Schedule to the Ministry of Health (Factories and Workshops Transfer of Powers Order, 1921) .. ..	—	—
Total .. ..	9	9

\*Including those specified in sections 2, 3, 7 and 8 of the Factory and Workshop Act, 1901, as remediable under the Public Health Acts.

*Outwork in Unwholesome Premises, Section 108, nil*

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

H. ROBINSON CODD, M.R.C.S., L.S.A.,

Medical Officer of Health to the Frome Rural Council

Nunney, Frome

April 20th, 1938